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BARANDUIN

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game fee - not set as of yet.

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This is BARANDUIN and, for what it is worth, it chronicles the design, playtesting, and (hopefully) eventual open play of a new Diplomacy* variant based on the saga of The Lord of the Rings by J. R. R. Tolkien. Two previous series of Diplomacy variants are already in play based on this saga (Middle Earth Diplomacy and Mordor Versus the World) but the designer of this game (as yet unnamed) felt that neither series did justice to the players in the sense of placing them in much the same situation as the principals in the saga. Actually, the Middle Earth series are merely based on the era that Tolkien created and are supposed to be set prior to the time of the Fellowship of the Ring (Banks Mebane's MED IV is set in TA 1900).

The Mordor vs. the World games all share one point which tends to annoy me. The new variant presented here attempts to remove the anachronism of the simultaneous existence of Rohan and Rhovanion and to include the conflict between the elves and orcs for control of the forest of Mirkwood. Here are the rules for prototype game 1.

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1. Except for the differences noted below, the rules of the game of Diplomacy and the house rules of WARS Press will control the progress of the game.

2. All the pieces on the board at the start of the game are armies. There are three strengths of armies employed at the beginning of the game: single armies, double armies, and a triple army. Each has the same supply requirement of one supply center but they have a strength of 1, 2, and 3 respectively when supporting or attacking. Other than the multiple armies on the board at the beginning, no additional multiple armies may be raised nor may a multiple army be rebuilt if it is annihilated in the progress of the game.

3. The starting positions of the pieces are as follows:

MORDOR (Sauron): triple army - Barad-Dur (ole Sauron himself!).
"black" double armies - Isengard (Saruman), Mount

Gundabad (the Great Goblin), Minas Morgul
(King Ringwraith, Lord of the Nazgul),
Udon, (the Lieutenant of the Tower of Barad
Dur), Moria (?), and Dol Guldur (?).

single army - Umbar (the Corsairs)

ROHAN (Theoden): double army - Edoras (Theoden).

"white/pink" single armies - East Emnet (Eomer) and West
Emnet (Erkenbrand).

GONDOR (Denethor): double army - Minas Tirith (Faramir).

"red" single armies - Pelargir (Aragorn) and Dol Amroth
(Prince Imrahil).

The MEN OF THE NORTH (King Brand):double army - Dale (King Brand).
"blue" single armies - Esgaroth (?) and Bree (?).
The ELVES (Celeborn):double army - Lorien Wood (Celeborn).
"green" single armies - Mirkwood (Thranduil) and Riven-
dale (Elrond).
The Dwarves (King Dain Ironfoot):double army - Erebor (Dain).
"yellow" single army - Ered Luin 2 (?).

4. A special playing piece, The Ring, begins the game in the supply province of The Shire. This piece does not require the support of a supply center and belongs to no player at the beginning.

5. The province of Tolfalas is considered both a sea and a province.

6. There are four seasons for each game year. They are Tuile (Spring moves), Laire (Summer Ring transfers), Yavie (Autumn moves), and Hrive (Winter builds/removals and Ring transfers).

7. The Ring may be moved along with the playing piece (unit) that starts in the same province as the Ring each movement season; or it may be left behind as the unit moves. The only other way that the Ring may be moved is during Laire or Hrive, when the unit which has the Ring in its possession may order it to be transferred to a unit in an adjacent province. As Ring transfers take place after builds, newly built pieces may be utilized to transfer the ring during Hrive. If a unit in the same province as the Ring is forced to retreat, the Ring may be carried with it if the player so declares. Otherwise, the Ring is assumed to have stayed in the vacated province. If a unit in the same province as the Ring is annihilated, the Ring is assumed to have been left in the province.

8. If the Ring is left behind in any sea province except Tolfalas, it is assumed to have been sunk at sea and can only be recovered by a double or triple army of Mordor. A unit can deliberately "sink" the ring by so ordering and that order may be in addition to its regular order. However, it must be sunk in the sea in which it began the move.

9. Any player who has the Ring in the same province as his double army (except in the case of a sunk ring) may declare during any season that he is "putting on the Ring." From this point on, the Ring cannot be separated from the double army except by the elimination of said army. Should this occur (the player "losing the Ring") he is out of the game -- his units are thrown into civil disorder and may neither move nor support. They are eliminated if displaced. They may, however, receive support should another player so desire. The next owner does not automatically "wear" the Ring but must make the decision himself whether he will carry it or wear it. When a double army is wearing the Ring, it acts to convert the double army into a triple army (or, in a battle against Mordor units, a quadruple army) and renders the army invisible. The invisible army is ordered to move the same as regular armies with the exception that the order is not exposed unless it results in a conflict between it and at least one other unit. In this case, the results of the move are disclosed, but not the unit itself.